



Nancy Landon Kassebaum

United States Senator
Kansas

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WASHINGTON, D.C.--July 14, 1988--The Senate today gave final approval for the Air Force to purchase up to 211 business jets over the next seven years, Kansas Senators Nancy Landon Kassebaum and Bob Dole announced.

The Tanker-Transport Trainer System was included in the conference report on the Department of Defense authorization bill approved by the Senate today by a vote of 64-30. The House also passed the conference report today and it now goes to the President.

"I'm not only pleased that Congress has agreed to authorize this program, but also that the Senate Appropriations Committee has included first-year funding in the Defense appropriations bill," Kassebaum said. "It will be essential to make sure necessary funds are provided as that appropriations bill makes its way through Congress."

"While I have some strong reservations with certain arms control and Strategic Defense Initiative provisions in the bill, I am pleased that the TTTS program has won final approval," Dole said. "As we have worked so long and hard to guarantee, Wichita will now have the opportunity to play a crucial role in the Air Force's important new trainer program."

The three main competitors for the TTTS program are all based in Wichita: Beech Aircraft Corp., Cessna Aircraft Co., and Learjet Corp.

Under the TTTS program, the Air Force would buy twin-engine business jet aircraft for use in training tanker and transport pilots. The program is authorized for \$14.1 million in the first year, a figure that allows the Air Force to purchase the first jet and perform engineering modifications. With full future appropriations, the program could total \$1.5 billion through 1995, including the purchase of 211 airplanes, 14 simulators, and necessary support and training facilities.

"This program could provide a real boost to one of our state's vital industries," Kassebaum said. "But my interest is much more than parochial. This is a sound and sensible program."

Using business jets to train tanker-transport pilots would provide those pilots with more specialized training while cutting the workload on the aging fleet of T-37's and T-38's. Those jets are currently used to train pilots for either fighters and bombers or tanker-transport.

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